

TESTIMONY
of
Nancy C. Lewittes
Before the Aging Committee
of the
Connecticut General Assembly

February 16, 2010

Chairpersons Sen. Edith Prague and Rep. Joseph Serra and Honorable

Members of the Aging Committee my name is Nancy C. Lewittes. I would like to testify **in support** of H.B. 5111, An Act Concerning the **Alzheimer's Respite Care Program**.

My husband has been living through the mental and physical torments of Alzheimer's disease for the past ten years. Two years ago, his states of confusion and incapacitation associated with his condition necessitated my trying to send him to day care while I went to work.

My goal was to ensure that my husband continued to live comfortably in our home and to continue to have a worthwhile quality of life; but I could no longer afford the day care help. When I filed for and was awarded the grant from the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program, my husband's care at the Greenwich Adult Day Care was possible while he continued to live at home and it afforded me time to work (now look for work since I lost my job) and help to keep a major financial worry at bay.

In summary, this program has allowed me to cope with the emotional and physical stress of caring for a loved one. Respite care is one way to help delay nursing home care and is far less expensive than the alternative. Nursing home will easily cost \$70,000 a year. Respite care equates to both taxpayer savings and a better quality of life for the Alzheimer's patient. This economic comparison doesn't even touch on health of the caregiver. Being a care-giver is very high

stress. Health is certainly impacted, as is the caregiver's productivity, and ability to earn wages and pay taxes.

Thank you for listening to reasons that I support the Alzheimer's Respite Care Program, and thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. I would be happy to answer additional questions at this time or concerns at a future date. Please do not hesitate to contact me.

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